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Simple Sketching

for
Extension
Teaching



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Simple Sketching

for Extension Teaching

Gertrude Lenore Power

It's not news to you, of course, that illustrations can call attention to a message, emphasize it, clarify it, or make it more interesting.

They are helpful in all teaching--including Extension teaching. Whether in circular letters, leaflets or other publications, on chalk boards or newsprint pads, illustrations can help you get your points across. Do you use them?

Maybe your first answer is, "How can I use them? I can't draw and neither can my secretary."

Well, many people feel that way, and perhaps it's because they've never tried, or having tried were discouraged by the results. And this may have been because they were too involved with details so they missed the big simplicity of the whole drawing.

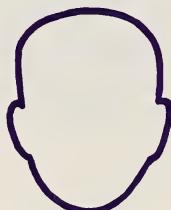
In printed publications, it is generally true that illustrations are good photographs or professional art work. In circular letters and talks, art work may be more casual and still do a good job. Here are some ideas on this casual type of sketching.

Sketching Emotions

Drawings of the various expressions of the human face can be useful in both circular letters and in talks.

Suppose you want to write a letter calling attention to something that could and should be improved in your county. You have decided on "A Sad Situation" as a heading. With this, in order to catch the eye, you could use a drawing of a very sad face. For a more cheerful type of letter the heading might be "By a Happy Coincidence--", in which case a smiling face could accompany the phrase.

These are just two examples of the way drawings of faces with different expressions can be used. There are many more.

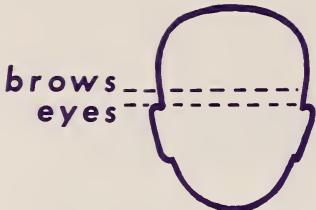


To show emotion, you only need the face, and the full front face is the easiest to draw.



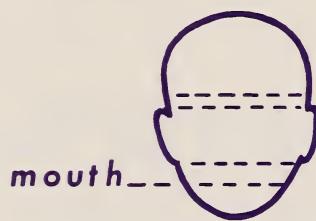
You may start with a circle for the face's outline, as many children do. Or you may prefer to start with an oval and add handles on either side for ears. With a little practice, you then may want to vary the shapes of your faces, making some long and thin, some sort of square or oblong, and some rather plump.

A few general suggestions, about placing the features may

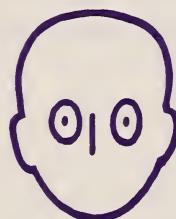


be helpful to you, although you need not follow them strictly.

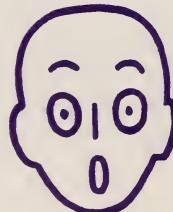
For most purposes, the eye-structure--eyes and brows--may be placed almost halfway down in the face. The bottom of the nose falls about halfway down in the space between the eyes and the chin, and the mouth may be placed a little less than halfway between the bottom of the nose and the chin. These relationships vary with individuals, of course, but generally speaking, they apply.



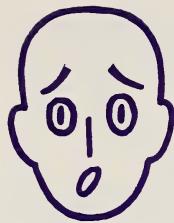
Most emotions can be shown by changes in the eyebrows, eyes, and mouth. The nose, although important to our breathing, is not expressive emotionally; after all, it doesn't change much in appearance whether we laugh or cry, except perhaps to turn red when we do the latter!



Let's suppose now that we want to show surprise. We put very large oval eyes with black centers in our face outline, about halfway down. If we add eyebrows quite high over the eyes and an open mouth (another oval), we express surprise.



Now, suppose we want to show fear. Let's start again with the eyes which may remain



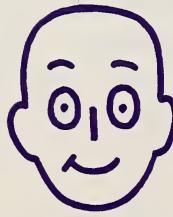
the same as those showing surprise. But now we add heavier eyebrows and make them go up toward the middle of the forehead. We also drop the mouth toward the chin and put it on a slant.



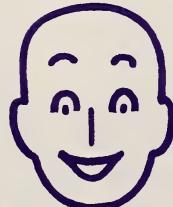
Let's try anger too. Again we'll begin with the eyes as they were for surprise. But now we slant very heavy eyebrows down toward the bridge of the nose. And we then add a down-curved line for a mouth.



And now let's try our sad face mentioned earlier. These eyes may be oval, but more than half their area is heavy lids. The eyebrows are heavy and go up toward the middle of the forehead. The mouth is a small, down-turned curve.



But let's get in a happier mood. We'll go back to the oval (surprise) eyes for this. We place light, curved eyebrows high over the eyes, and add a mouth with curved up corners.

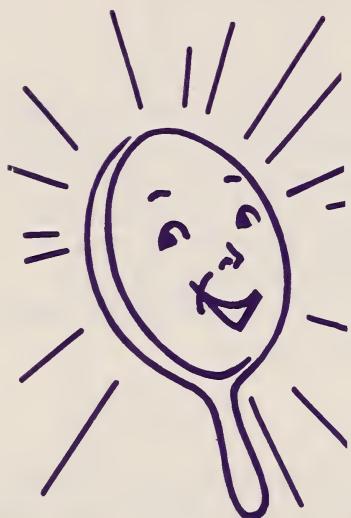


And to get even happier, let's put in half-moon shaped eyes, and an open, up-turned mouth, somewhat the shape of an orange segment.



We can also get happy eyes by making inverted, shallow "v" shapes.

And by drawing heavier lips, and adding hair and earrings, we make it plain that our face belongs to a woman.



You may find it useful at times to put faces on inanimate objects, such as pans, tools, refrigerators, and so on. If the objects can be made three-dimensional, they probably will be more effective. This means departing from the strictly front view, and this is fairly easy.

By making the eye that is farthest away, in this case the one on the right, smaller than the other, and by putting the nose and mouth a little off center toward this eye, we get simple foreshortening. The lines around the pan indicate that it is shining. That, of course, just be why it is so happy.

Sketching Action

If it's action you want to show--running, stooping, bending, and such moves--the whole figure does it best. And if you're not a trained artist (few of us are), it's a good idea to begin with stick figures.



As a matter of fact, many professional artists begin with a skeleton or stick figure to "swing in" the action they want.



You undoubtedly know what a stick figure is. It's usually a little man or woman made up of a circular or oval head, a long stick for neck and body, four shorter sticks for legs, four still shorter for arm parts, two shorter yet for feet, and two smaller ones for hands. However, interest may be added by making the hands and feet oval or bean-shaped.

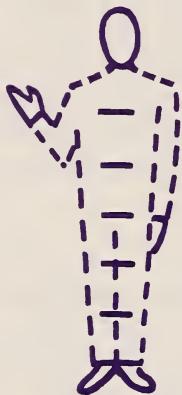
In front views, adding hip and shoulder lines may help. Notice that this fellow carries most of the weight on one foot, the foot under the head more than the other. In this position both hip and shoulder lines on this side are affected. The hip slants up; the shoulder down.



While front view figures are sometimes useful, for most purposes profile figures show action better than front views. For instance, if you try to draw a figure bending over in a front view, you end up with a rather confusing sketch, due to foreshortening, but in profile there is no doubt what the figure is doing.



If you want to give your stick figures faces, do so. Perhaps you'll want to add hair, hats, and clothes. Much can be done with hats and clothes to indicate who your little people are. Adding a skirt tells us the figure is a woman. Or putting a cowboy hat on a plain figure suggests a cowboy.



As far as a realistic proportion for full-length figures is concerned, most adults are between seven and eight heads (length of head) high. Children's heads, although smaller than adults', are larger in proportion to their bodies than adults' are.



Children are often amusing; perhaps that's why many cartoonists exaggerate the head size of their characters in order to give them the appeal that children have.

There are many styles in cartooning. Some cartoonists minimize the arm and leg lengths; some make the arms longer than the legs; some exaggerate neck length, others skip the neck entirely and let the head run right into the body.

Cartoons may be very simple, like the "gingerbread

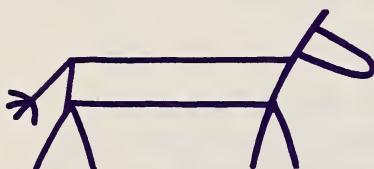


"man" type, which is just a padded stick figure, or they may be quite elaborate. If you're trying cartooning for the first time, it would be wise to at least start out with something simple. When drawing people walking, remember that the arms and legs move by opposites. That is, if the leg on one side is forward, the arm on that side will be back.

Sketching Animals

Sometimes you may want your human stick figure to have animal companions.

Animals, too, are easiest to draw in profile. Instead of "sticks" or thin lines for neck, body, and legs, try double lines; your sketch will look more realistic.



A horse's face may be a long, narrow oval; a cow's face bean-shaped.



A pig may be made of a large oval (for the body) overlapped by a smaller oval (for the head).



Ears, nose, legs, and tail are then added. The dip between

the two ovals at the top may be bridged to give the effect of a neck.



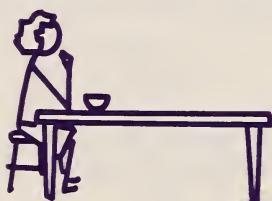
A chicken also may be made of two ovals connected by a neck. Beak, comb, wings, tail, and legs are then added.

Sketching Inanimate Objects

Maybe at times you'll want your human figures to sit on chairs at tables or other positions.



Again, like the figures themselves, it is easiest to draw most furniture in profile.



This is also true of automobiles, tractors, trains, boats, and so on.



While one often sees photographs of airplanes in profile, particularly on TV, drawings of planes may be more easily recognizable when the wings show.



This is best done in a slightly tilted, three-quarter view. The wing farthest away in this case is slightly smaller than the other.

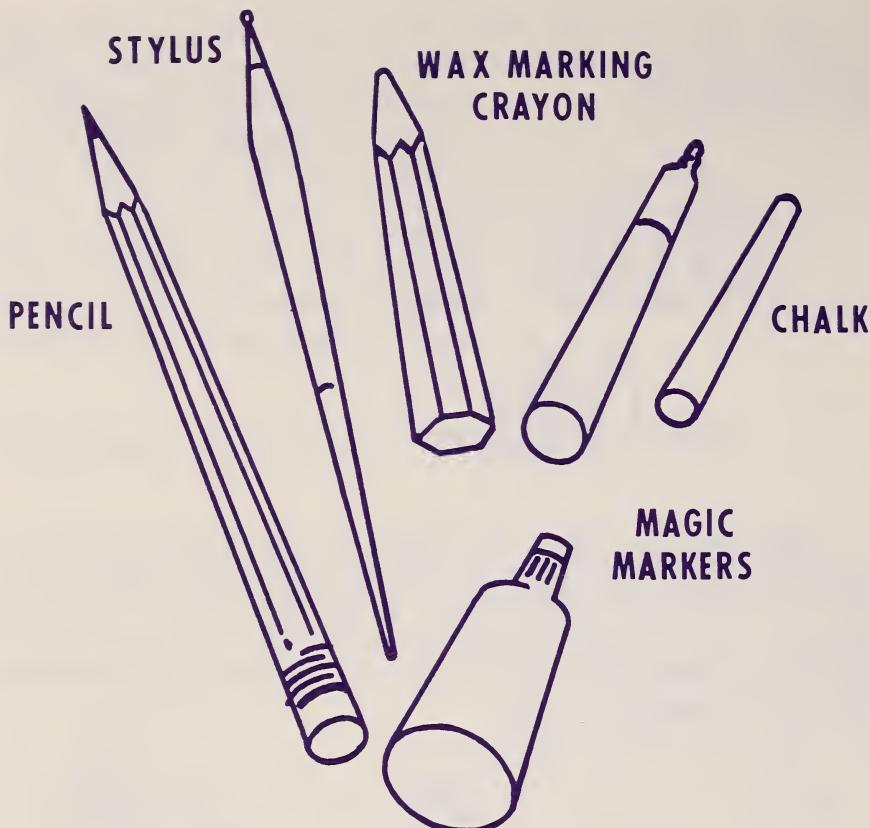


It is probably true that houses drawn in a three-quarter view are the most realistic, but for a simple symbol of a house or barn, the front view will do very well. For some reason the front view has more "character" than the back and sides. Evidently, most of us want "to put up a good front!"

And that is true, not only of our houses, but, of ourselves too. We usually try to look our best, and most of the time we also try to do our best. It's very probable that simple sketches will point up our messages and that the result will be better communication. Let's get started!



Incidentally, several of our secretaries, not trained in art, made drawings from ideas in this booklet. The drawings looked just fine. You, too, can do as well--or better.



SOME TOOLS

PENCIL _____ for sketching drawings to be used in mimeographed circular letters.

STYLUS _____ for tracing drawing on stencil.

WAX MARKING CRAYON _____ for use on newprint pad before groups of 25 or less. Ordinary crayon, even though broad, makes too light a stroke to be easily seen by larger groups.

MAGIC MARKERS _____ good for use on newsprint pad, especially if you can find one that doesn't stain through to the following page.

CHALK _____ for use on "blackboards". Preferred these days is yellow chalk on dark green chalkboards.